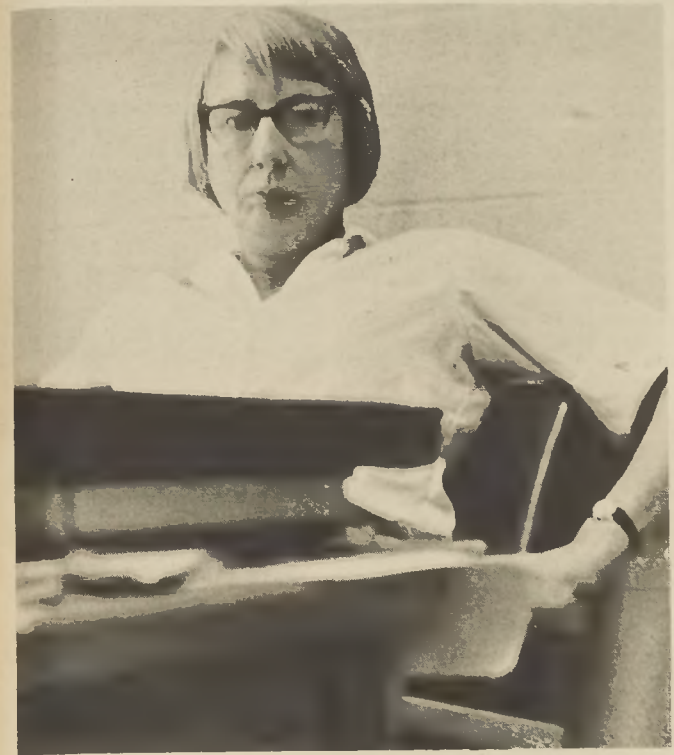


Dr. Nicholson Is Catalyst For New Drama

By GAYLE WATTS

"There are many students on this campus who are quite imaginative and who have much acting talent, but how do you get them to step forward?"



The speaker is Dr. Catherine Nicholson of the Fine Arts Department, drama division. And if you've wondered who has been for the most part responsible for presenting to students what they have shown such a consistent and enthusiastic interest, i.e., drama, this is your lady.

The presentation by the budding drama department of three plays during the past two years has shown that students here have a real interest in drama and that they desire to be presented with more of the same. The professionalism and style (despite what Mr. Donnell Stoneman, writing in the Charlotte East, may say - we frankly wonder if he would recognize style if he tripped over it) exhibited in the drama group's latest production, "Waiting For Godot", are a credit to the University and evidence of how the drama group has increased, if not in numbers, in talent and perseverance. And the catalyst for this outstanding development in drama on campus is Dr. Nicholson.

She commented that many people may be wondering why each of the three productions which have been staged by the group have been avant garde plays. "One reason is that students respond more quickly to these plays. Middle age people often reject these types and desire more traditional plays," she answered her query. "I find that students are far more interested in these plays that say something to them. Students catch on to these intuitively."

We are trying to do plays that students and people can not see elsewhere," Dr. Nicholson explained. She noted such places as the Mint and the country dinner theatres which offer different types of drama.

When asked why the drama group did not do Shakespeare, Dr. Nicholson replied that there was at the present not enough people or facilities to do Shakespeare well. "... and there's no point in doing it badly," she commented.

Dr. Nicholson is a vibrant, hard-driving director and her intense feeling for the drama is apparent in conversation about the development of drama here.

"The difficulty I had when I came here was that this is a commuter school and it was impossible to get all cast and crew members together," she reminisced. "This was most frustrating and rather discouraging."

The first production by Dr. Nicholson and the drama group was

"An American Dream". The cast and crew worked very hard -- even giving up Easter vacation -- but their expectations for audience was less than 25 people. The play was performed only one night - but it played to an overflow house. This event greatly encouraged Dr. Nicholson and those interested in having drama on campus.

Dr. Nicholson decided to do a play involving more people for the next presentation. "The Firebugs" became the next offering of the group -- a play with approximately 11 cast members and some involving some fairly involved technical work. For this staging, not enough technical people were recruited. But again, the play drew full to overflowing houses each of the three nights of its run.

Now the problem is finances. The next budget for this branch of the University to go to the state legislature includes a good size hunk for Fine Arts on campus. Dr. Nicholson is optimistic about the possibility of getting this allocation.

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